LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

Douglas and Margate
R.P.D.

The Great Opportunity
D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

Nationalisation
F. L. HAXELL

September, 1953

One shilling and sixpence

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THE BACK-HOME MOVEMENT

A YEAR ago this month I described how, during a 1940 air-raid, I had found a frightened seven-year-old lost among the rubble; and that by 1952 he must have become a young conscript serving in Korea, Malaya, Egypt or Germany. This week I thought of the Unknown Child again, when I heard from a jubilant Serviceman: 'I shall soon be shaking the desert dust off my shoes—but not soon enough—and by the time the next issue is out, I'll be on my way back home to Blighty. Here we were interested in p.o.w. Condron's *Open Letter to My M.P.* in July; the ending of the Korean war—for the present—is a tremendous relief. Now perhaps it will start a back-home movement from Korea which will spread to Malaya and everywhere else. I'll soon be off, but there remain thousands of us who instead of wasting time and money here could be helping our country in a really positive way at home'. Today when some of our war-time seven-year-olds are coming back home from a land devastated as we in Britain can hardly imagine, it is timely to look at the picture on page 409. Our lads, the lucky ones, have homes to come back to. And how welcome this advance guard is! In that same issue a year ago we quoted an American reader asking: 'Will people in Britain wake up in time to save themselves?' Today we can print letters expressing joy in that first step, 'the signing of a truce in Korea. Now we must work for ending all the wars'. What a bitter struggle achieving this has meant for the forces of peace, comments another, recalling the stages leading to the triumph of compelling these 'blood-drenched maniacs to meet and admit to the world that these people whom they had called "Gooks" were their equals. What a victory for the peace-loving common people! It still behoves us to be on our guard; for those who thrive on war will use every means to get the fighting started again in Korea. But there is an awakening among many people. They are beginning to see who is for war and who is for peace'. And our North country reader adds that 'some of the thanks for this awakening must go to *Labour Monthly* for the way in which it has exposed the vile aims of the warmongers and shown the road to peace'.

OUR CONTENTS

A glance at the Contents opposite shows that we are deeply concerned with today's foremost practical question: how, where and in what way is the voice of decent ordinary people in Britain to make itself heard—and heard quickly? This month there are two examples of *The Great Opportunity*—to borrow the title of D. N. Pritt's stirring article on page 399. In a few days' time the Trades Union Congress meets and at the end of the month of September the Labour Party Conference opens at Margate. And if the voice of Britain is not to be heard in the gatherings of the Labour movement, where can it be heard? *Labour Monthly* readers know that well enough; many will themselves be delegates. We have used much of our space in the last months for these questions: R.P.D.'s Notes *The New Labour Programme* in the July issue; in August J. B. Figgins' forthright *Challenge to Britain* and Florence Mattison's moving *A Veteran's Voice for Peace*, which breathed

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Notes of the Month

Douglas and Margate

'If the present standards of defence are to be preserved, economies in detail will be needed to stop up gaps elsewhere. . . . Those who can see the end of the cold war can see the escape from the dilemma. For the rest, the dilemma remains'.

(The Times, July 16 and 18, 1953.)

THE battle for the future of Britain is approaching new heights. No party can any longer attempt to conceal the deadly consequences of the American cold war policy for Britain and Western Europe, or deny the imperative necessity to strike out a new course. But the majority of the dominant leadership of the two major parties still resist decisive change. Toryism under Butler and Salisbury has thrown away the advantage of Churchill's initiative of May 11, and accepted new and dangerous capitulations to Dulles alike in the Far East and in Europe. Right-wing Labour, despite the positive speeches of Attlee carrying forward the initiative of Churchill, still concentrates its main fire, not against Toryism and the American war policy, but against its own rank and file, who recognise more clearly the necessity for change. Nevertheless,

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the irresistible pressure of the peoples for a new course drives forward. The Korean Armistice has been won in spite of all, and the menacing plans of Dulles and Rhee for renewed war in the Far East can and must be defeated. The Soviet reply to the Washington Conference proposals and the speech of Malenkov have brought anew to the forefront the original Churchill plan for Great Power talks. The Soviet practical initiative in reducing armaments and increasing social expenditure has blazed the path forward which the people of every country would desire to follow. The French working class, with the strength of their general strike demonstration against the Government's economy offensive, have shown that the workers of Western Europe are in movement, and given new inspiration to the wage struggle of the British working class. In this situation the ball is at the feet of the rank and file of British labour to lead the way for the whole nation, to press forward the fight against Tory reaction and the American war policy, and to win the battle for peace, for improved living standards and social advance, and for the victory of a new Labour Government committed to these aims. These are the conditions which give exceptional importance to the coming Trades Union Congress at Douglas and the Labour Party Conference at Margate.

Stalin on the Labour Party

Twenty-six years ago Stalin analysed the two conflicting elements which compose the Labour Party:

> Let us take the 'workers' party' in England (the Labour Party). You know that in England there is a separate party of the workers which bases itself upon the trade union organisations of the workers and employees. No one would hesitate to describe this party as a workers' party, and it is so described, not only in England, but in all other Marxist literature. Can we say, though, that this party is actually a workers' party, a class party of the workers setting itself against the bourgeoisie? Can we say that *in fact* it is a party of one class, the working class, and not a party, let us say, of two classes? No, we cannot say this.
>
> In fact the Labour Party in England is a party of a bloc of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie of the towns. In fact this party is a party of a bloc of two classes, and if we have to say which influence is the stronger in this party, the influence of the workers, directed against the bourgeoisie, or the influence of the petty bourgeoisie, then we must say that the influence of the petty bourgeoisie is predominant in this party. It is this fact really, which explains why the British Labour Party is in fact an extension of the bourgeois Liberal Party. Yet in spite of this it is called in Marxist literature a workers' party. What is the explanation of this 'contradiction'? It is that when we define the Labour Party as a *workers'*

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party, we have in mind, not the actual situation in this party *at present*, but its type of structure as a workers' party, by force of which in certain conditions, it can be transformed in the future into a genuine class party of the workers, setting itself against the bourgeois world.

(J. V. Stalin, Interview with students of the Sun Yat Sen University, May 13, 1927.)

This 'contradiction' here brought out, between the two opposing class forces within the Labour Party, is not only the key to the entire history of the Labour Party, and especially during the quarter of a century since Stalin wrote. It is also the key to the role of the Communist Party, as the conscious 'class party of the workers', setting itself, not in opposition to the Labour Party, despite its reactionary leadership, but as the vanguard campaigning force of working class interests and policy to assist the advancing battle of the organised workers and sincere socialists within the Labour Party striving to 'transform it in the future into a genuine class party of the workers, setting itself against the bourgeois world'.

Two Parties in One Shell

Never in the entire history of the Labour Party has this contradiction been more manifest than in the contrast between 'Challenge to Britain', the draft programme of the Executive Committee, which has been met with such a record dull thud of resentment and disgust throughout the organised movement, and the Preliminary Agenda of close on 400 resolutions submitted by affiliated organisations—over seven-eighths from constituency Labour Parties. This contrast is the more striking, because the majority of the resolutions were prepared before 'Challenge to Britain', and the amendments to the latter have still to follow. The two documents are both published from Transport House; with that their resemblance ends. They speak an entirely different language. They are like the policy statements of two different parties, yoked together for the moment within the confines of a single organisation. The resolutions do not reflect the usual heterogeneous mixture of a variety of standpoints, right, left and centre. There is practically no expression of the right-wing viewpoint from below—and this despite all the discipline and purging inflicted on the constituency Labour Parties from above. There is an overwhelming common trend running through the resolutions—a trend critical of the Executive and pressing for a concrete alternative policy in the direction of socialism and peace. The battle for the future of the Labour Party is reaching a new height.

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Criticism of the Executive

Characteristic of the resolutions is the repeated explicit criticism of the Executive Committee, alongside the implicit criticism by the majority of the remainder in presenting an alternative policy to the official policy. Thus Bury and Radcliffe C.L.P. has tabled a motion:

> This Conference views with dismay the increasing differences between the decisions of the National Executive Committee of the Party and the rank and file members of the Party. It therefore urges the National Executive Committee to take more cognisance of the wishes of the rank and file for a more Socialist policy, as expressed at the 1952 Annual Party Conference at Morecambe.

Manchester, Blackley, C.L.P. 'strongly condemns the National Executive Committee for failing to implement the decisions of the Morecambe Conference'. Swindon 'notes with strong disapproval' the failure to implement Conference decisions on equal pay in the new draft programme. No less than eleven resolutions are tabled on purges and discipline—all critical of the E.C. 'Unnecessarily and unwisely proscribed'; 'views with concern the ever lengthening list of proscribed organisations'; 'deplores the action of the N.E.C.'; 'views with grave concern the extension of restriction of the political activity permissible to individual members of the Labour Party'; 'strongly deplores the rulings of the N.E.C. regarding the expulsion of members'; 'deplores the policy of proscription'; 'greatly concerned and disturbed at the continual use of this power which restricts the freedom of thought and association on the part of Labour Party members'; 'not the way to build a fearless and enthusiastic movement'; 'grave injustice . . . the present seeming intolerance'—such is the universal language of these resolutions on discipline. There is not a single resolution in favour of the E.C. purges. This battle on democracy within the Labour Party is symptomatic of the deeper battle on policy.

Crisis of Right-wing Social Democracy

What this contrast reveals, no less than the whole situation within the upper leadership, is that a very sharp stage of crisis has been reached in the whole basis of right-wing policy both within the Labour Party and in the trade unions. This crisis is itself the reflection of the crisis of Britain's imperialist policy since the war, and the approach of the British people to a new orientation. The latent contradiction of class interests within the Labour Party, analysed by Stalin a quarter of a century ago, has continued to

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develop. The first big crash came with the world economic crisis in 1931, the consequent split in the second Labour Government over the economy offensive demanded by the American financiers against the workers and unemployed, and the open passing over of the principal right-wing leaders and opponents of Communism to the Tory camp. The second protracted crisis developed during the nineteen-thirties, with the battle of the left, led by the Communist Party, for working class and popular unity against the Chamberlain Munichite and pro-fascist policies, resulting in the expulsion of Cripps, Bevan and other leaders, and later of Pritt. This battle came near to victory; and only the resistance of the right-wing machine saved Chamberlain, prevented the Peace Front, and thus led to the second world war. The third and deeper crisis has followed the experience of post-war Britain and the third Labour Government.

Graveyard of Illusions

The Labour Government of 1945-51, headed by Attlee, Bevin, Morrison and Cripps, was the first Labour Government with an absolute parliamentary majority, running its full term of five years with a large majority and a further year with a narrow majority. It thus put to the test the claims of the right-wing leadership to be able to carry through the transformation to socialism on the basis of a parliamentary majority. The result has spread deep disillusionment with right-wing policy. Not only was no basic change in class relations achieved; the measures of capitalist nationalisation strengthened capitalist monopoly and aroused discontent and frustration among the workers in the nationalised industries; profits soared to record heights, while the intensified exploitation of the workers was expressed in falling real wages; the social reforms of the initial period gave place to the austerity drive; and in the resulting disillusionment Toryism was able to climb back to power.

Socialism and Anti-Socialism

This negative outcome in the domestic field cannot be separated from the record in the international sphere. In fact, it reflected the basic imperialist policy of the Government, the Bevin policy which dominated its entire programme. The complaint is often sounded on the left that the third Labour Government abandoned the aim of socialism and replaced it by the formula of the 'mixed economy'. The truth goes deeper. Socialism is no longer only a theory of the future. In the international field socialism exists in the Soviet

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Union and is being built up in the People's Democracies; and the national liberation struggles of the colonal and dependent peoples against imperialism are an integral part of the advance of socialism on a world scale. In this basic world confrontation the Bevin policy aligned the British Labour Government *against socialism*, in the anti-socialist camp of capitalism led by the United States finance capitalists; and subordinated the interests of the British people to the demands of the American war policy, the rearmament programme and colonial wars. This led to the deepening chronic crisis of Britain's economy, the austerity drive against the standards of the people, and the wrecking, not only of the aim of socialism, but also of the programme of social reform.

Social Myths

To cover up this fiasco the apologists of the right wing have endeavoured to present a picture of a supposed 'social transformation' of Britain effected by the third Labour Government through the extension of social services, the establishment of a 'Welfare State' and the 'redistribution of the national income'. This 'social transformation' is presented as the *substitute* for socialism. But hard facts do not bear out the picture. The spurious character of the official statistics of apologetics prepared for this purpose, as they used to be prepared similarly for Liberal Governments, has long been exposed: statistics which ignore half the profits of the rich (undistributed profits and capital gains); statistics which solemnly deduct taxation (direct) from the incomes of the rich, but ignore the deduction of taxation (indirect) from the wages of the workers and lower incomes; and comparisons which always disingenuously compare 1951 with 1938 and never with 1945, since a true comparison of the post-war years would show that even the temporary war-time shift indicated by these statistics was in fact increasingly reversed in favour of the wealthy under the regime of Bevin and Cripps. All this has long been exposed. But what is especially relevant and significant today is the question of what is happening now to this supposed 'social transformation' and 'welfare state' as a result of the effects of the American war policy and rearmament programme.

Capitalist Utopia

For in fact a twofold process has been taking place. First, the aim of socialism was replaced by the new capitalist utopia of the 'welfare state' and 'full employment'. And now the 'welfare state'

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begins to disintegrate under the effects of the war and rearmament economy, with the increasing burdens of taxation and rising prices; while the openly expressed fears of the possibility of economic slump round the corner, with the hardening of export competition, indicate the precarious basis of 'full employment'. Writing in *Forward* on March 8, 1952, G. D. H. Cole declared:

> My opinion is that in the countries of Western Europe Socialism is dissolving even as an ideal related to current practice, and is being replaced by a striving towards the Welfare State, in a form which leaves open the indefinite continuance of a 'mixed economy', still largely capitalist.

In other words, socialism as the supposed aim of social democracy is now *consciously* replaced by capitalism with the familiar Liberal social reform dressing. But the harsh operation of the economic laws of modern monopoly capitalism (maximum profit, intensified exploitation of the colonial peoples and metropolitan workers, and militarised economy) cannot be so easily evaded.

Beveridge on Beveridge

The other horn of the dilemma of reformism begins to make itself felt today. After the aim of socialism has thus been replaced by the 'welfare state', by 1953, Lord Beveridge was proclaiming the collapse of the 'welfare state':

> Every year since 1948 benefits have been becoming less and less adequate, because as the benefits remained fixed the cost of living has gone up and up and is still going up and up and up. The other side of it is that National Assistance which the experts and I thought would have to continue on a small scale and would gradually diminish, is increasing year by year. Today there are at least twice as many people, nearly two million people, in receipt of National Assistance, subject to a Means Test, more than there were three or four years ago.
>
> Social security is not being provided as of right and by virtue of contributions by insurance, but by a National Assistance Board, which, before it helps a person, satisfies itself that you are poor and in need of poor relief. . . .
>
> The Government will be faced with this alternative: Is the Government next year going to raise all benefits to adequacy for subsistence or is it going to say in 1954: 'Formally we abandon security against want without a means test. We drop the Beveridge Report and the policy of 1946'.
>
> (Lord Beveridge, House of Lords, May 20, 1953.)*

*It should be borne in mind that even the 'subsistence' in the Beveridge sense, now referred to as a vanished ideal, was very narrowly defined. The best commentary on its adequacy was provided by Lord Beveridge himself when he turned aside from his philanthropic labours on behalf of the poor to consider his own future as an old person in the golden age of social security and freedom from want:

'The only serious worry for old people like me is the fear that we may live too long after we have spent our savings and when we cannot earn.'

(Lord Beveridge, 'A Letter to Posterity', *Listener*, January 3, 1952.)

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The figure of 2,200,000 on poor relief ('National Assistance') in 1951 has since risen to 2,400,000 in 1952—a staggering figure, which in the bad old days would have been called 'increase of pauperism'. For those interested in the theory of increasing misery, the verdict of the official *Economic Survey for 1952* may be noted, which recorded that total food consumption per head in the United Kingdom had fallen from 3,000 calories in 1938 to 2,990 in 1950, and 2,970 in 1951.

'The Intractable Problem of Want'

Replying to Lord Beveridge on behalf of the Government in the House of Lords debate, Lord Salisbury declared that the Government could find no solution for 'the intractable problem of want':

> In solving the intractable problem of want, the welfare state has created new difficulties for which a solution must be found or it would contain within itself the seeds of its own dissolution. . . . He frankly did not know what would be the complete solution.

Not a very hopeful prognosis.

'Redistribution?'

Nor is the picture of 'redistribution' more promising. Under the heading 'The Rich Are Richer', the Labour M.P., Crossman, summarised the results of the Labour Government's 'redistribution' efforts (*Sunday Pictorial*, July 26, 1953):

> If the Labour Government really did soak the rich, how did the Duke of Westminster manage to leave such a huge fortune? (Newspaper estimates have varied between £20,000,000 and £60,000,000!)
>
> The explanation, as shown by official statistics, is that the one class whose condition has remained almost unchanged since the war is the capitalists.
>
> In 1938 one per cent. of the population owned 55 per cent. of the capital. Now the one per cent. own 50 per cent., probably because the moderately wealthy have been spending a little of their capital in order to keep up their standard of living.
>
> But those with over £10,000 worth of property are actually slightly wealthier than before the war, even if you take into account the fall in the value of money.

A recent survey by H. F. Lydall published in the Bulletin of the Oxford Institute of Statistics showed that only 6 per cent. of the adult population hold any stocks or shares, and that those holding amounts over £10,000 represent one in eighty-eight of the adult population (*Financial Times*, July 25, 1953). Indeed, Crossman's verdict that 'the one class whose condition has remained almost unchanged since the war is the capitalists' errs on the side of

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optimism. Between 1946 and 1951, that is, during the years of the Labour Government, wages increased by 29 per cent., prices by 34 per cent., production by 43 per cent., and profits by 100 per cent. (W. Stevens at the Margate T.U.C. in 1952). Despite all the 'New Thinkers', there is evidently still some room for the 'obsolete' conceptions of class struggle and of the battle for socialism against capitalism.

Bismarck, Lloyd George and Mr. Attlee

When the Liberal Government of Asquith and Lloyd George initiated the 'welfare state' with the social legislation of 1906-14, old age pensions, the 'People's Budget' of 1909, and national insurance in 1911, deliberately copied from Bismarck's model, they were not only seeking to defeat socialism by social reform, along the lines set by Bismarck. The real purpose of the 'People's Budget', as revealed in subsequent memoirs, was to put over the increased taxation for the gigantic Dreadnought programme and rising armaments under cover of a show of social reform and demagogic slogans. The same tactics were repeated by Bethmann-Hollweg, when he combined the increased naval appropriations with increased taxation of the rich in a single financial measure in order to win the support of Social Democracy, and were subsequently carried to an extreme height by Hitler. This double strategy of the Asquith-Lloyd George Government was repeated by the Attlee-Bevin-Cripps Labour Government of 1945-51. The real essence of the Government's programme was the Bevin policy of expanded armaments, overseas military adventures and the tie-up with American imperialism. The social reforms, which received the loudest public boosting, were the smokescreen for this real programme. The decisive and catastrophic outcome for the British people corresponded to the real programme, and not to the smokescreen. The crumbs of social benefits obtained by the workers were far outweighed by the burdens of the war policy, subjection to American domination and the rearmament programme.

Social Services and Armaments

In place of the myth of the social transformation of Britain into the 'Welfare State' the reality has been the military transformation of Britain into a super-militarised (the most heavily militarised nation in the world in proportion to population) satellite subsidised appendage, pawn, base and instrument of American world expansion.

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He knew of no period in British history when the overseas liabilities of the British people, particularly in defence, were greater than they were today, nor of any period in which a nation of our size had undertaken such large international liabilities and so large a defence programme as we had now.

(R. A. Butler, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the Budget debate, House of Commons, April 20, 1953.)

In 1935 arms expenditure was £136 million, and social services expenditure £260 million. In 1953 arms expenditure is £1,776 million and social services expenditure £1,130 million. Thus in 1935 twice as much was spent on social services as on arms. In 1953 one and a half times as much is spent on arms as on social services. This reversal is the real transformation which has taken place in favour of military expansion at the expense of social services—the exact opposite of the mythical picture of the transformation into the 'social services' state.

Pricking the Bubble

In a revealing survey of the 'Burden of Public Spending' and the 'Double Load of Defence and Welfare' *The Times* on July 16-18, 1953, found that 'the largest item of expenditure on goods and services in 1952 was defence'. The extension of social security and of redistribution of income by taxation was found to be much less than commonly supposed:

Public transfer payments, social and non-social together, now redistribute 12.6 per cent. of the national income, against 11.2 per cent. in 1938. Half the redistribution is effected by social benefits, half by other payments (chiefly interest on public debt). . . .

It may seem rather surprising . . . that the proportion of income redistributed by social security should have grown only from 4.5 per cent. in 1938 to 5.4 per cent. in 1952. . . .

Since 1950, when defence and social services took equal slices, the share of defence has grown by over one half, while the social service share has been cut by one fifteenth.

With regard to the common claim that Britain is supposed to have 'the highest standard of social services in the world', *The Times* caustically comments, even in comparison with other capitalist countries (the contrast would be overwhelmingly more striking in the case of the socialist countries):

If private spending for the same objects is added, Britain devotes proportionately less to health and education than the United States and less to social security than several European countries. Nor are the amounts vastly greater than those spent before the war.

'But'—and here comes the crux of the problem—'it is difficult to accommodate them along with the defence bill'.

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Britain's Dilemma

From this analysis follows the inexorable conclusion to which *The Times* points. There is an inescapable conflict between the demands of an inflated arms expenditure and the social needs of the British people or the requirements of productive development (capital investment). This is the 'double burden' which is beyond Britain's strength to bear. One or the other must give way. 'If the present standards of defence are to be preserved' (and they are in fact likely to be increased, by the taking over of the costs of military occupation in Germany, equivalent to £80 million, and by the cessation of American military aid, equivalent to £140 million), 'economies in detail will be needed to stop up gaps elsewhere'. Of course there could be an alternative solution—to end the cold war:

> Naturally, if international tension were to be permanently relaxed, the problem of the double burden would fade away. Without that, the prospect is forbidding.

But *The Times* editorial at the end of the survey shrinks from the solution.

> Those who can see the end of the cold war can see the escape from the dilemma. For the rest, the dilemma remains.

'For the rest'—that is, for the representatives of Tory reaction and the right-wing leadership in the Labour Party and the trade unions.

Choice for Douglas and Margate

Here is the crux of Britain's situation. Here is the crux of the battle of policy which confronts the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference. Here is Labour's opportunity. This is the dilemma of Britain's overstrained economic situation which compels even a Churchill to seek wistfully some relaxation of international tension and escape from the American shackles—but fitfully, hesitantly, weakly in face of the overpowering compulsion of the dominant Tory majority which maintains adherence to the old course. Labour has the supreme opportunity to take up decisive leadership on behalf of the nation. Only a programme for peace, for ending the cold war, for friendship and trade with the socialist world can free Britain and open the way to raise the social standards of the people. The rank and file understands this. The right-wing leadership still resist. The proceedings of the coming Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference will be measured by the extent to which they face this choice and rise to the height of this responsibility.

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A Disintegrating Leadership

Incapable of facing this dilemma, the right-wing leadership is thrown into confusion. The present crisis of Labour policy is not merely expressed in the battle between the dominant leadership and the rank and file, as reflected in the conflict between the official draft programme and the resolutions from below. It is also expressed *within* the right-wing leadership. Just as Tewson is thrown into conflict with Meany in the American-dominated breakaway trade union international at Stockholm, so within Britain the T.U.C. General Council dominant leadership enters into conflict with the Labour Party leadership and conducts an ostentatious flirtation with Toryism. Lawther attacks Attlee. Deakin announces that the Tories are 'not a bad bunch'. Morrison enters the lists against Greenwood. One set of leaders accepts appointments by the Tory Government on the Board of the denationalised steel industry, while the remainder proclaim the fight for re-nationalisation. On nationalisation a hundred divergent views are sounded. All this is an indication of the developing crisis of the former solid bloc of reactionary leadership, consequent on the manifest bankruptcy of their policy and the discontent of the rank and file.

The Battle for Working-Class Unity

It is in this situation that the battle for working-class unity takes on its full and deeper meaning. The unity of the working class can only be successfully built up and maintained on the basis of a common class policy. Betrayal of working-class interests inevitably leads to disruption of the working class. It was American diplomacy and finance, and the surrender to the American cold war policy, which disrupted the unity of the World Federation of Trade Unions and split away the Marshallised trade unions in obedience to the policy of their governments. Now that new currents in the international field are pressing for the removal of tension and the ending of the cold war, it is high time that these moves to international co-operation should find reflection in the international trade union field. When Tewson in his presidential address at the Stockholm Congress of the I.C.F.T.U. urged the statesmen of the world 'to follow the trade union practice of exploring the possibility of getting together for the purpose of talking', he expressed a sentiment which could already be applied nearer home—in the trade union field. If the statesmen of the opposing groups of powers can and should meet to remove international tension and promote co-operation, is it not all the more obvious that the leaders of the

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I.C.F.T.U. and the W.F.T.U. should meet to explore the possibility of removing tension and restoring international trade union unity? Similarly within the British Labour movement. To fight for unity it is not enough to deplore the bickering of the leaders. It is necessary to fight for the ending of the expulsions and proscriptions and to promote democracy and equal rights within the political Labour movement, so that policy can be hammered out by the participation of all socialists and trade unionists. Above all, it is necessary to fight for a common policy, corresponding to the interests of the working people, of peace and social advance, which can alone unite the whole working class and rally to them the majority of the nation.

Trade Union Demands

There can be no doubt that the organised membership in the trade unions and political Labour movement is pressing forward with increasing insistence for such advance. This is the significance of the resolutions tabled in the preliminary agenda alike of the Trades Union Congress and of the Labour Party Conference. In the case of the Trades Union Congress the resolutions have to reach the national level before being tabled, and therefore afford a less complete mirror of the discussions below. But here also, among the 63 resolutions, significance attaches to the resolutions on nationalisation, including for extended nationalisation with workers' control (Foundry Workers) and 50 per cent. trade union representation on nationalised boards (Railwaymen); the four resolutions against wage restraint, and four for the reduction of the period of national service; the two for East-West trade, one for cutting arms expenditure and one for Great Power negotiations.

Labour Party Ferment

In the case of the Labour Party preliminary agenda the resolutions directly reflect the discussions of the rank and file in the organisations below; and there can be no question of the overwhelming trend they reveal. No less than 82 resolutions deal with questions of foreign and colonial policy, almost all in a direction conflicting with right-wing policy and calling for a radical reversal of the existing reactionary line. A notable innovation is the inclusion of 20 resolutions on colonial policy, all without exception expressing hostility to imperialist repression and in varying forms expressing the conception of the alliance with the freedom struggle of the colonial peoples—in glaring contrast to the reactionary docu-

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ment on 'The Labour Party and the Colonies' (supporting the colonial wars in Malaya and Kenya) presented by the Executive to the conference of their 'International' at Stockholm. Equally significant are the over fifty resolutions on nationalisation, almost all for extended nationalisation, including eleven for its extension to the land, and sixteen for a new type of nationalisation, with workers' control (eleven) and reduction of compensation charges (five). Among the host of home resolutions on the cost of living, housing and rents, health, education and local government, may be noted the thirteen resolutions calling for the abolition of the House of Lords—again in direct contrast to the line of the Executive. There can be no question of the general political trend revealed in these resolutions.

The Road to Victory

The battle which is due to open at Douglas and at Margate will not reach completion in these assemblies. The majority of the resolutions from local organisations will never be discussed and voted, but will disappear in the preparation of the final agenda. Their significance is rather as a measure and reflection of the thinking of the active rank and file than as a basis of the current decisions which will be reached. The characteristic machinery of these conferences places heavy obstacles in the way of decisions being reached on the basis of the consultation and mandated instructions of the membership. But this does not diminish the significance of the militant spirit and outlook which these resolutions demonstrate among all the active sections of the rank and file membership. Their victory will require many hard battles. But they are pointing the road forward to future victory. For the type of policy which they voice, and towards which increasing numbers are so manifestly moving, alone begins to present a positive answer to the present problems of the Labour movement. They represent a serious striving towards peace and the national independence of Britain and all the peoples in the subject Empire; towards the reduction of armaments and the ending of the cold war; towards the raising of social standards and the advance against capitalism and in the direction of socialism. The militant fight for these aims will be carried forward at these conferences and beyond these conferences. Their eventual victory is certain; for there is no other path forward for Britain and for the British Labour movement. And in proportion as the unity of all sections of the left, Communist and non-Communist alike, and of wider and wider sections, is forged for

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these aims, the sooner will that victory be won, and the way will be opened for a new future for Britain and for the final triumph of a united working-class movement leading the overwhelming majority of the nation for the building of socialism. This is the perspective which will inspire the fight of the left at the coming Trades Union Congress at Douglas and the Labour Party Conference at Margate.

August 12, 1953. R.P.D.

THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

THE political situation in this country is at the moment simpler and clearer than it has been for years; it is simple and clear not only for Socialists, but also for all who want peace, and for all who don't want to starve. It is simple and clear not alone because Socialists can see—as it is their business to do—the policy needed to save the country from economic disaster, but because the broad lines of that policy have already won support from very wide circles of the population.

Stated in the simplest possible form, the policy for salvation falls under four heads. (I do not name peace as a specific head; it is something on which everything else depends, and all these heads serve peace, directly or indirectly.)

The first head may be entitled Four Power Talks; it demands that we should actively seek immediate negotiations with the other great Powers, and above all with the U.S.S.R., in order both to reduce tensions and to solve disputes on specific points between the Socialist and the capitalist sections of the world.

The second head insists on swift and large-scale reductions in military expenditure of all kinds, including the present grossly inflated rearmament and overseas expenditures.

The third head, 'East-West trade', calls for extensive trade between Britain and the countries of the new world.

The fourth head demands our independence of the U.S.A., not merely economically and culturally but also politically and militarily.

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These heads, although directly concerned only with foreign affairs, provide the strategy which should determine tactics on any specific problem, at home or abroad, and in effect they lay down the lines of the whole of British policy. They are of course closely linked to one another; and between them they can guarantee peace, restore our economy, and leave us free to be genuinely friendly with all peoples, including the Americans. They constitute the policy which Socialists, within and without the Labour Party, demand; and—more important—they are already called for by far wider circles of the population. Four Power talks, free and untrammelled, are demanded by public opinion generally, by a wide range of newspapers, by Sir Winston Churchill and many of his followers and by Mr. Attlee and many of his associates and most of his followers. Reduction in armaments is becoming ever more popular; as one American leader after another has to confess that the U.S.S.R. is not aiming at war, the last anxieties of even the most easily bamboozled of us begin to fade away, and they see only the appalling waste and danger of armaments races. East-West trade is demanded by practically the whole business and industrial world, as well as by the rank and file of the population. And, on independence, even those Tories who, true to their class, have been prepared to sacrifice the independence of their country in the service of the hysterical American 'campaign against Communism', by now resent and hate American domination; although they will not yet a while say so in public.

We are thus presented with a straightforward, comprehensible and practical policy for our salvation, commanding wide popular support. And the only alternatives are either swift disaster or slow disaster. In theory, all that we want should follow automatically; nothing could be easier than that the people of this parliamentary democracy, wanting this policy, should insist on it being adopted. But our parliamentary democracy works its politics and its policies through parties; and to parties we must look. The situation thus presents the Labour Party, to which this policy should be welcome and natural, with perhaps the greatest opportunity in its history. Here it has, for the asking, a practicable, hopeful and glorious policy, already popular, and providing at once the longest step toward Socialism that present circumstances permit, the widest possibility of vast economic and political advance, and the best chance to sail the ship of Labour out of the doldrums in which Tory calm prevails into a decisive electoral victory.

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There is the opportunity; and the forces of Labour must line up swiftly for the battle, since time is precious and—to pursue the metaphor—the annual manœuvres are due at Margate at the end of September. It is thus important to see, at this vital moment, what is the condition and morale of both the General Staff and the troops.

The answer, once again, is pretty simple and clear; it seems like the crudest black and white contrast but is no exaggeration of the truth. The General Staff, the leadership, is as bad as it has ever been; the rank and file has seldom been better than it is at the moment; the cleavage which has existed for many years between the two is sharper than ever; and the prospects of rank and file victory, with all its consequences of tremendous revival of the Socialist movement and of the country, are at the least far better than before.

Let me give some of the evidence which establishes this answer. There is of course a mass of evidence everywhere; but at the moment it is conveniently illustrated and crystallised in two publications, one bad and one good.

The bad one, which gives the case of the General Staff, is oddly entitled *Challenge to Britain;* it was presented in June by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party 'to the Party's Annual Conference, and through it to the people of Britain'. It is described as 'a programme of action for the next Labour Government', but seems designed as an insurance against there being another Labour Government for a very long time; for the General Staff, to look at the situation merely on the low plane of party prospects, should realise that something dynamic is needed if an election is to be won, and there is nothing dynamic in *Challenge to Britain.*

The good document—the case of the rank-and-file—is the *Resolutions for the 52nd Annual Conference,* printed and circulated in the usual way by the Party office in July.

Let me first examine *Challenge to Britain.* At a time when attempts to deal with home policy as if it were unaffected by foreign policy, it has no section dealing expressly with foreign policy, but it inevitably discloses the official outlook in that field. And how does it deal with the four heads of our policy? Four Power talks and reduction of armaments are not expressly or directly discussed; the draftsman just quietly 'shows them the door' by writing of 'over-

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seas military commitments' as something axiomatic and immutable, and by the assertion that:

> We live in a divided world. Whenever the opportunity offers we must work to end the Cold War and halt the rearmament race. But so long as there is a threat of aggression Britain must share with her allies the burden of military defence.

This passive shirking of the problem is of course the sort of sabotage that is normally written by the professional anti-Socialists of the Foreign Office; but it fits in tragically with the occupational disease of right-wing Social Democrats, hostility to every actual Socialist country.

On East-West trade, this unchallenging *Challenge* is no better:

> Labour will endeavour to maintain and expand East-West trade within the limits imposed by the Cold War.

(It is as if an habitual drunkard and gambler were to recognise his duty to maintain his starving children, and to promise faithfully to do so 'within the limits imposed by my drink bill and my bookmaker's accounts'.) And the document treats us to long discussions of our very real trade problems as if the only possible solution was to make 'sacrifices' in order to increase those of our exports 'which earn us dollars and gold'—i.e., in the main, exports to the U.S.A., which does not want them—and to 'restrain imports which cost us dollars and gold'—i.e., to go without things we really need because we cannot afford to buy them from the U.S.A. and will not buy them from the Socialist world which is willing to sell us many of them much cheaper, in return for goods which we can export to them. In all this discussion, there is virtually no mention of the possibility of trade with countries that do not use 'dollars or gold'.

As for independence of America, the only mention in *Challenge* of anything of the sort is the hope that by means of this imports and exports policy, we may achieve 'independence of American aid'. Thus the authors of this policy tacitly accept the continued political and military domination of our country by the U.S.A., and limit their ambitions to getting along without direct financial aid—which in any case is coming to an end—by following the Tory policy of pushing our exports on a reluctant American market whilst taking as few imports from there as possible.

Thus, this miserable booklet not merely denies us the policy we need, and that most of the public is already demanding; it offers no Socialist remedy and little hope of even ultimate Socialist achievements. Even nationalisation is treated as something to be applied

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apologetically, never for its own sake as part of the advance to Socialism, but only where 'the immediate national need makes the case overwhelming', and where nationalisation can be seen to be 'essential to the fulfilment of the prime purpose' of 'increased production and increased productivity'. This almost amounts to refusing to nationalise anything unless it is unprofitable or inefficient.

The whole booklet is indeed little more than a statement of the Tory policy of concentrating on exports to the U.S.A. at the price of sacrificing living standards and of working harder. There is not much in it that the Tories couldn't preach, and still less that they would not carry out in an emergency; and the general bathos of its unscientific unsocialist unstatemanship can be measured by three of its points; the first, that if 'national defence needs' confront our shipbuilding industry 'with large surplus capacity in the form of idle yards', the remedy should not be to 'permit such yards to be scrapped' (we are not told positively what it should be); the second, that 'investment calls for confidence' and accordingly we sturdy seekers after Socialism ought to 'give private industry sufficient encouragement to venture capital on risky projects'; and the last, that among the sacrifices we should be ready to accept (whilst Socialist countries instead of making sacrifices march from one economic improvement to another) is to 'encourage men and women to remain at work as long as possible' after they have reached pensionable age, not merely to enable industrial bosses to make profits out of them for a few more years, but also to ease the burden of national insurance!

The full horror of this document, coming just at this time, can only fully be appreciated when one remembers the circumstances in which it was published. Four Power Talks had been moved into the forefront of the country's policy as recently as May, 1953, this essentially Socialist step being taken not by the Labour Party but by Sir Winston Churchill. Mr. Attlee followed him immediately in words; but Transport House, so far from joining in in any way, simply issued this wicked document a few weeks later. Nor was this the worst; for, when Mr. Attlee in the July debate reasserted the case for Four Power talks, he was promptly followed by the chilling voice of the machine, through the mouth of Mr. Denis Healey.

Even from the vote-hunting angle, one wonders what Transport House can hope to gain by the dreary compromising Toryism of this document; it cannot in truth win any votes at all, and if adopted

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would lose millions of Socialist and floating votes. Published at this moment of opportunity, it is more of an epitaph than a challenge.

Let me turn with relief to the rank and file document, the *Resolutions*. There are nearly four hundred of them, ranging from nationalisation of the land to disapproval of Sir Hartley Shawcross. They come from all over Great Britain, and express an encouragingly wide variety of opinions. Study of them discloses a number of interesting points.

Firstly, all the right-wing elements in all the constituency Labour Parties and other affiliated organisations, with all the help and encouragement that Transport House may have given them, have only been able to produce by way of approval for the leadership of the Party or for *Challenge to Britain*, two meagre items, one is a resolution welcoming 'the proposals designed to achieve solvency, as stated in *Challenge to Britain*', and demanding further details; and the other is a resolution calling on the Party 'to continue its strong policy' (with no indication of what that strong policy is thought to be) in relation to the cost of living. Apart from those, there is no resolution expressing any approval of anything the leadership has done or proposed, nor even expressing any right-wing point of view; the vast majority of them express strong left-wing opinions.

Secondly, eleven resolutions protest in various ways against the policy of proscribing organisations and expelling individual members.

Thirdly, over fifty resolutions make demands, often in very strong terms, in relation to nationalisation (including land), re-nationalisation, and the democratic running of nationalised industries.

Fourthly, there are over eighty resolutions dealing with foreign policy and the related topics of rearmament, conscription, colonialism and East-West trade. Apart from one or two which deal with special topics giving little opportunity to disclose such a spirit, all these resolutions breathe a strong Socialist spirit, as far removed from *Challenge to Britain* as can be imagined; in fact, as a whole, they present a splendid challenge to Britain. They include demands for a real peace policy, for independence from U.S.A., for Four Power talks—in short, for the whole of the policy outlined above.

Lastly, two resolutions deal expressly with the old 'swindle' of the leadership running away from Conference decisions. One of

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these asserts in vigorous language that the policy pursued by the National Executive Committee, after the Morecambe Conference had 'clearly laid down the lines along which the National Executive Committee should proceed', has been 'a breach of confidence', and 'calls upon the new National Executive Committee to take immediate steps to implement the desired wishes of the Labour Movement'. The other 'views with dismay the increasing difference between the decisions of the National Executive Committee and the rank and file', and 'urges the National Executive Committee to take more cognizance of the wishes of the rank and file for a more Socialist policy' as expressed at Morecambe.

This is an excellent document. One must of course remember that the rank and file is nearly always far ahead of the 'machine', and that it is part of the skilled operation of 'managing' conferences for the officials and leaders to divert, or cajole, or confuse, determination of the rank and file to pass good resolutions, and in the end, by one trick or another, to avoid implementing even those that are passed. But these *Resolutions*, coming on top of Morecambe at such a vital moment, and constituting so glaring a contrast with the official *Challenge*, do more than just present difficult problems for the cunning and experience of right-wing leaders and their officials. They create a position in which either the rank and file will win the day in terms of actual resolutions passed, or the apparent and partial successes of the 'machine' will deceive nobody, and will represent as complete a defeat for them as the 'vote of confidence' in the Chamberlain Government, passed in the House of Commons on May 8, 1940, by a majority of 81, represented for Neville Chamberlain.

The prospects for the Labour Party are, I repeat, better than they have been for many years. It should be able to go forward, at and after Margate, with a new dynamic, and popular policy, not 'split' but more united than for many years, and supported by the whole of Left and Centre opinion, under new leaders uncompromised either by the sins of the present machine or by vacillating attempts of their own to keep a foot of clay in each camp. Once it takes that step forward, it will not merely win elections; it will bring about national rehabilitation, settled peace, international friendship, and economic prosperity.

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NATIONALISATION

FRANK HAXELL*

IT is deeply ingrained in the mind of the average worker that nationalisation and socialism are synonymous terms, meaning the same thing. It is, of course, very natural that they should hold this view when it is borne in mind that when the pioneers of the movement, Keir Hardie and his colleagues, used the term 'nationalisation' this was widely understood as meaning that the industries of the country should be taken out of the hands of capitalism and run on behalf of and in the interests of the people.

The debates in the earlier reports of the Trades Union Congresses and Labour Party Conferences underline this conception of nationalisation. For example, identical phraseology is used in resolutions calling for the nationalisation of railways and canals at both the 1910 and 1911 Trades Union Congresses. These resolutions stated:

> This Congress expresses its opinion that the policy of working agreements and amalgamations, tending as it must to the formation of trusts and combines, is not calculated to advance the best interests either of the public or the employees and affirms its conviction that the time has arrived for the adoption of the policy of nationalisation in the interest of the whole of the community,

clearly expressing nationalisation of an industry as an alternative to the logical development of private enterprise—the formation of monopolies, cartels and trusts. Will Thorne at the T.U.C. in 1910 in supporting a resolution calling for the nationalisation of the railways and the canals, said: 'Some time ago Mr. Richard Bell made a speech in which he said that if the railways were nationalised—personally I should prefer them socialised!'

The term 'nationalisation' as used today by the right-wing leadership of the trade unions and Labour Party has, however, an entirely different meaning. What they are referring to is the taking-over of industry by the State to be run on capitalist lines in the interests of capitalism. The purpose of their form of nationalisation is to reform capitalism and not, as was meant by the pioneers, the replacement of capitalism by a socialist system of society. The more correct term to be used for the present so-called nationalisation is State capitalism.

The use of the term nationalisation in place of State capitalism is deliberate and is in order to hide the fact that the present short-

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comings of the nationalised industries arise directly out of the purpose for which they were nationalised and the form that nationalisation takes.

The situation, therefore, after five years of nationalisation in mining, electricity and railways is complicated. On the one hand representatives of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress can openly declare themselves against any further nationalisation at this stage. On the other hand one of the major issues between right and left in the Labour Party is on the question of whether or not to include in the next General Election programme a demand for further nationalisation. Meantime the Tory Government can successfully carry through the de-nationalisation of the Steel industry—an industry that is absolutely vital in the economy of Britain. This situation must be exercising the mind of every active worker in the trade union and Labour movement who desires to see socialism established in Britain.

To see how this situation has arisen we must go back a few years. Under the heading 'Industry in the Service of the Nation'—Chapter 4 of 'Let us Face the Future', the policy document on which Labour won its victory in the 1945 General Election—was put forward the perspective and industrial programme of the Labour Party. It proposed, among other things, the nationalisation of coal, electricity, transport and steel.

So far as coal was concerned it was admitted on all sides that the industry was on the verge of bankruptcy and completely incapable of meeting the demands that industry was making upon it, and that the only solution of the problem was to re-equip the industry with new and up-to-date machinery and the introduction of new methods of production. To make the industry efficient and capable of meeting the industrial requirements both at home and abroad required that considerable sums of money would have to be invested for capital development. This prospect the bankers, investment companies and industrialists were not willing to face, in view of the remoteness of receiving an adequate return for their investments which in any case could yield far greater profits in other directions. The situation facing the industry, therefore, was either collapse and bankruptcy or the acceptance of some form of State intervention and control. Who could complain, other than for the sake of appearances, of such proposals to nationalise the industry? For the basis was that the industry be run by a Board appointed by the Minister of Fuel and Power but not subjected to Parliamentary or

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any other form of public control; that this Coal Board by the very provisions of the Act facilitated the appointment of people either connected with the previous owners or big business; that adequate compensation for the previous owners be paid at a rate that could not possibly have been obtained had it remained under private enterprise; and allowed for the retention of the old managements.

But perhaps it might be said that the miners would complain. Were they likely to, when they had been fighting for years for the nationalisation of the industry, and the Government introducing the Bill were the accepted representatives of the trade unions and organised working class? And in any case, had they not been led to believe that nationalisation would open a new era for the mining industry?

Much that has been said of coal can be said of the railways. The Government had for years been subsidising the industry, guaranteeing in fact through the public purse a steady income for the owners of the industry and at the same time enabling them to keep freightage charges at a level which would not unduly affect the price levels and the profits of those industries availing themselves of rail transport facilities. State intervention and control of the railways had become a necessity in the interests of capitalism itself.

The issues, however, in connection with electricity were undoubtedly different. This was not an industry on the verge of bankruptcy—on the contrary, it was an expanding and developing industry which was yielding fairly substantial profits to the owners. It was, however, along with coal and transport, one of the auxiliary services and the main reasons for the nationalisation of electricity are firstly because the modern State requires a highly efficient and centralised electricity service, and secondly, for the purpose of supplying a cheap raw material for the running of capitalist industry.

It is advisable to recognise that so far as the capitalists are concerned, they are prepared under certain given conditions to accept nationalisation, even though the industry is a profitable one, providing always

(1) That the particular form of nationalisation leaves the control of industry in the hands of big business.

(2) That the industry requires by its nature a highly centralised and co-ordinated structure which is best brought about by a form of State control operating to ensure the provision of cheap raw material for its industries whilst at the same time giving a reasonable return on its investments and adequate compensation to the previous owners.

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ON KOREAN SOIL

Sculptured figure by IVAN FUNEV and his group (Bulgaria)

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The requirements of the present form of nationalisation are that the industry is able to produce through the sale of its commodities sufficient revenue not only to meet the normal working expenses but also to meet payments in connection with compensation and interest loans that are launched for the purpose of capital development. The result is that in electricity, for example, out of an income of £256.4 millions, £190.5 millions is absorbed in actual working costs and the rest (£65.9 millions) is absorbed in compensation, interest, depreciation, taxation, sinking funds, etc. It is true, of course, that in any case a reasonable percentage of this expenditure would have to be met, even if the present form of nationalisation was changed into a more direct form of public ownership, but it is sufficient to assume—and in fact the figures substantiate it—that approximately 50 per cent., or somewhere in the region of £30 millions was directly accounted for in compensation and interest charges.

The effect of the nationalisation of electricity has been to provide dearer electricity for the general public by way of increased price per unit, cheaper electricity for the industrial user at the expense of the domestic and commercial user, as is exemplified by the fact that in the year 1951-52—the year in which the decision was taken to raise electricity charges—the industrial user consumed $25\frac{1}{4}$ million units of electricity as against $23\frac{1}{4}$ million units by the domestic, farming and commercial users. The price paid by the domestic, farming and commercial users was approximately £143 millions. The price paid by the industrial user was approximately £$105\frac{1}{2}$ millions. In other words, the industrial user has consumed some 2 million more in units but paid £$37\frac{1}{2}$ millions less than was paid by the other users. This cheaper rate for the industrial user in fact brought a saving to industry of £50 millions.

Cold, hard facts arising out of these experiences leave little room for doubt that the real purpose of the nationalisation was not in order to establish workers' control of these industries or as a means of transferring the power of the capitalist class into the hands of the working class or as a necessary step along the road to the establishment of a Socialist Britain. Nationalisation was an act that was necessitated by the objective economic and political conditions prevailing in capitalist Britain at the close of the last World War. Its purpose was part of the process that is designed to reform capitalism, to make it more efficient; in fact, to give capitalism a new lease of life.

The aim of the duplicity that has been practised on the workers of this country was to create the conception that the purpose of the

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nationalisation of mining, electricity and transport was as a first instalment along the road towards socialism and at long last the workers engaged in these industries would, through the medium of the State, gain control of their industries. The fact is that there is little or no change in the managements, that wages and conditions have to be fought for just as hard under nationalisation as under private enterprise, while the operation of policies of rationalisation become far more easily adaptable under a nationalised industry. This along with other processes increases the output per worker, ultimately resulting in loss of employment for many of the employees. This experience tends to create not only a disillusionment but grave doubts as to whether nationalisation is in fact in the interest of the working people. This confusion and frustration gives the opportunity to the right-wing leaders to endeavour to turn it into opposition to any nationalisation or extension of nationalisation.

The victory of the right-wing in this direction—if a victory at all —will be short-lived. The decisions at Margate and Morecambe last year emphasise that in the ranks of the trade unions and the Labour Party there exists a powerful force which is determined to carry through the fight for nationalisation as a necessary part of a socialist programme and a planned economy.

This force within the Labour movement could quite well turn capitalist nationalisation into socialist nationalisation. To do so they must as a first step in the forthcoming Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference reach decisions which will facilitate (1) the removal of the burdens that are at present being carried by the nationalised industries in the form of compensation and interest payments on loans, (2) the removal from the nationalised Boards of those people who are representing big business and who, by their actions, identified themselves as being clearly antagonistic to nationalisation, (3) their replacement with people who believe in nationalisation, with representatives from the trade union movement, and (4) the direct participation of the workers and technicians in the management of the industry. These decisions, along with demands for further nationalisation (such as the chemical industry) and the 're-nationalisation' of the steel industry as the first steps of the Labour Government when it is returned to power, will do much to arouse the whole of the working class into activity that will force the leadership of the movement to adopt and operate socialist policies in the solving of Britain's crisis.

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PUT THE CHILDREN FIRST

G. C. T. GILES

THE Report on Schools of the House of Commons Select Committee on the Estimates was a blow to the Tory Minister of Education and her policy in the last twenty months. But its publication only two days after the appearance of the section on Education in 'Challenge to Britain' has been distinctly unfortunate for the Labour Party Executive. For by spotlighting the shockingly low standard of material provision for popular education the Select Committee has exposed the nakedness and the airy fairy demagogy of the Labour Executive Programme, as well as the sickening failure of the two post-war Labour Governments to make any real inroads into class privilege in education or to lay the foundations of a democratic educational system.

'Challenge to Britain' speaks of 'a radical reform of our school system' (with a passing dig at the 'prep' and 'public' schools) and then maps out 'a ten-year programme which concentrates on three things:

'1. To improve the quality of education by reducing the size of classes;

'2. To begin the attack on educational segregation by getting rid of it in our State-aided secondary schools; and

'3. To bridge the gap between science and industry by expanding technical education as rapidly as possible.'

All these are admirable and absolutely essential steps in laying the foundation of a democratic and up-to-date system of popular education. Indeed they might be reasonably described as 'radical reforms'. They are certainly reforms which are passionately and persistently demanded by tens of thousands of parents. Finally they are essential to the economic future of the country.

But the whole of this programme could and ought to have been accomplished by the 1945 Labour Government which had a mandate in the 1944 Education Act strengthened and directed by repeated resolutions of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress. But the achievement of such a programme would have meant a frontal attack on class privilege as well as the allocation of a high measure of priority to education and of a big share of the

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national resources. That was not forthcoming. Instead the late Ellen Wilkinson and the late George Tomlinson used their talents on sunshine speeches, while the same old bureaucracy of the Ministry of Education played the same old game of stalling the enthusiasm of parents, teachers and progressive Education Authorities. The regulation which permitted classes of 40 in the primary school—the basis of the whole educational system—remained in force. Attempts to plan a comprehensive secondary school system on the part of a number of progressive Local Authorities were frowned upon and held up. Blacklisted schools were left to rot by the inevitability of gradualness and meanwhile to mock the hopes of children and teachers. Consequently—to quote the damning words of the Select Committee's Report which applies impartially to the Labour and Conservative Governments—'the real situation was vastly different from what had been hoped. At every point [the Committee] were confronted with overcrowding, lack of schools, heavy transport costs, a shortage of teachers and often rapidly deteriorating and even dangerous schools'.

Such is the real situation nine years after the passing of the most democratic Education Act in British history. And for six of the nine years a Labour Government was in power. It is at this stage that the Labour Party Executive has the effrontery to bring forward —without a word of self-criticism—the elementary proposals quoted above. Small wonder that the Labour speakers in the House of Commons debate on the Select Committee's Report made such a pitiful showing. But better late than never? It might seem that the Labour Party Executive recognises the shortcomings of the post-war Labour Governments and while not brave enough to admit them means now at any rate to initiate a real advance in accordance with its long-standing policy. But does it? A closer examination of the full programme reveals that it actually jettisons—by silence at least and presumably for ten years—some most important parts not only of Labour's educational policy but even of the 1944 Act. There is no mention of Nursery Schools. There is no mention of 'blacklisted' and other out-of-date and insanitary buildings—'a situation' to quote the Select Report once again 'which has, in effect, got beyond the control of local authorities because of financial stringency'—a situation for which Cripps was no less responsible than Butler. There is no mention of raising the school leaving age to 16 without which there can be no possibility of equality of opportunity. The carefully qualified proposal of a comprehensive school system only up to 15 would in practice consolidate privilege. There

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is no mention of the County Colleges promised in the 1944 Act. The suggested provision of higher technical education is alarmingly inadequate against the pressing national needs for scientists, technicians and engineers. There is no mention of the need for expansion of the Universities though the number of students is decreasing from the post-war peak. The proposal for a Royal Commission on the Universities is bound to postpone the attack on this urgent problem. What about the privileged section of education—the public and prep schools which received such a nasty dig in the opening paragraph of the programme? They can breathe again. Having survived Butler in 1944, and Wilkinson and Tomlinson since, they have little to fear from the class-war warriors of the present Labour Party Executive:

> Our aim is to end privilege in education, but because our object is to level up and not to level down, our Socialist (*sic.*) attack on educational inequality will concentrate, in the first instance, not on abolishing fee-paying schools but on improving the standard of our free education.
>
> Once we have substantially reduced the size of classes in primary schools and created our new secondary schools, our aim will be to take over the the best of the public schools for children who stay on after fifteen.
>
> This final stage in the achievement of fair shares in education cannot be reached within our ten-year programme.

The old school tie will continue to decorate the necks of future Labour Cabinet Ministers!

Thus the programme of 'radical reforms' turns out to be a tacit abandonment of democratic advances long since demanded by the Labour movement and even accepted in theory by the Tories.

Nor is there anywhere in the document any firm and factual commitment even to this limited programme. Indeed its most significant feature is vagueness and evasion.

Take for instance the promise to reduce the size of classes, for which 'extra teachers and more classrooms are the main requirement'. More classrooms mean more money, more materials, more manpower. None is mentioned specifically. Extra teachers mean decent salaries and in particular equal pay for women. Neither is mentioned.

The inadequacy and vagueness of the educational proposals are not accidental. They are typical of the programme as a whole—and for a very good reason. It is not a Socialist programme nor even a programme which guarantees fundamental advances along the road to Socialism. In spite of a few demagogic phrases the

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authors do not approach educational reform from a working-class point of view and do not appear even to realise that class privilege in education is deeply resented by the mass of parents and that radical reforms in education can be a powerful weapon in the struggle for power.

Secondly the acceptance of dependence on American imperialism, of the cold war and the consequent 'need of sacrifice' prohibit absolutely the provision of sufficient resources even to check the disastrous deterioration of educational standards revealed by the Report of the Select Committee. Thus even the promise of 'further large sums of money' for education is qualified by the ominous phrase 'even if this means going without other things'. Fortunately this is only a draft programme. It has already been severely criticised by the National Association of Labour Teachers and no doubt there will be a host of amendments submitted at the Labour Party Conference. The Report of the Select Committee has provided a priceless and unexpected opportunity, which the National Union of Teachers has been quick to seize. At the beginning of 1952 the famous 'Open Letter to Parents' was decisive in checking the worst of the economies contemplated by the Tory Government. A national campaign launched now against the size of classes and the blacklisted schools and in support of the teachers' pending salary claims could not only force on the Labour Party Executive a minimum progressive programme but could even wring from the Tories measures which would at least prevent the mass of the children from being deprived of their right to a decent start in life.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

TRADE UNIONS AT THE CROSS ROADS

Mondism will destroy the real trade union movement, and be the beginning of Fascist trade unions in this country. It will increase the wage slavery of the workers. Therefore, I appeal to all class-conscious workers to read correctly the economic signpost. Trade Unionism is at the cross-roads. Shall the majority of the General Council lead us to the servile state, to the re-establishment of capitalism, through rationalisation and Mondism, or will the masses oppose this machine that is being used to manacle them? It is indeed a momentous decision that is to be made, a decision which, while it cannot stop the urge of economic development, can delay the drastic changes in the structure of trade unionism, and the formation of a new social order for a further period, and in doing so increase the poverty of the workers and the power of our oppressors.

From *The Issues Before the Swansea T.U.C.*, by A. J. Cook, September, 1928.

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OLD FALLACIES FOR NEW

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

(Continued from last month)

V.

Mr. Strachey repeats the usual right-wing reformist and capitalist stories that the Communists don't genuinely care about success in strikes, don't believe in the value of political and industrial action in a democracy, strike when the chances of victory are faintest, and so forth. The only thing he fails to do is to provide the slightest evidence. And in the absence of evidence such assertions become a mixture of thought-reading and slander.

Was it not the Communist-led Unemployed Workers' Movement, for example, which by organising a series of hunger marches in 1934-36 constrained the Government to modify drastically their proposed alterations in rules governing relief, to the advantage of the unemployed? Or has Mr. Strachey's desertion of Marxism also led him to revise his own history? Or to come to post-war years, whose effort, exercised to rally opinion within the movement, brought about the withdrawal of the hated Order 1305 which made strikes virtually illegal, and thus armed employers against the 'countervailing pressure' of the workers? Were not the Communists at the head and front of the campaign?

Moreover Strachey must have an extraordinary contempt for the rank and file trade unionists—engineers, miners, foundrymen, electricians and many others—who not merely persist in electing Communists as general secretaries, executive and district committeemen, organisers and branch officials, but do so in increasing numbers. For according to him, they are choosing men and women who carelessly drag them into strikes, don't care who wins, are only interested in 'rehearsal' for *Der Tag*, are not interested in material advantages, and so forth. What nonsense! Is it not rather that the rank and file trade unionists get tired of people who chatter about democracy, and in practice refuse to lead the struggle for material advantages, and turn instead to people who believe (as Strachey presumably once did) that democracy is 'inseparably bound up with the question of who is to own the means of production' (*What Are We To Do?* p. 336) and therefore are on the alert to strengthen the organisations and fighting spirit of the working class, in the struggle for immediate interests, so as to encourage them to go on to the struggle for the abolition of the wages system?

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And lest Mr. Strachey repudiate that objective as an alien, 'essentially German' idea—there is no knowing where his conversion will stop—let us remind him of what an essentially British Socialist said on this subject. Hear Robert Blatchford, in that same *Merrie England* so piously reverenced, and so rarely recommended as reading, by the apostles of a 'mixed economy' and 'democratic' monopoly capitalism:

> The older trade unionists think that trade unionism is strong enough in itself to secure the rights of the worker. This is a great mistake. The rights of the worker are the whole of the produce of his labour. Trade Unionism not only cannot secure that, but has never even tried to secure that. The most that Trade Unionism has secured, or can ever hope to secure for the workers, is a comfortable subsistence wage. It is a good thing; it has long been the only defence of the workers against robbery and oppression; were it not for the Trade Unionism of the past and of the present, the condition of the British industrial classes would be one of abject slavery.
>
> *But Trade Unionism, although some defence, is not sufficient defence....* One difference between Socialism and Trade Unionism is that whereas the Unions can only marshal and arm the workers for a desperate trial of endurance, Socialism can get rid of the capitalist altogether. The former helps you to resist the enemy, the latter destroys him.

The reader will see that true-born Englishman Blatchford talking pretty much the same language as the German Engels on this question. The Communists of today, making allowance for the fact that unlike Blatchford they strive to extend the horizon of the workers to the entire world, and particularly to the exploitation and the struggles of the peoples of the Empire, speak the same language.

And Mr. Strachey's taunts about the workers being 'unaffected' and going 'Labour instead of Communist', leave them as unmoved as similar philistine taunts left Engels and Blatchford, Morris and Quelch. When Mr. Strachey gave up his patronage of Marxism, the Communist Party had 17,750 members: today it has more than twice as many, and its influence is immeasurably wider than it was then. Millions of workers went Labour in 1945 because they wanted to change their lives. It was a step forward for them to go Labour, a step towards Socialist consciousness from trade union consciousness or no class consciousness at all. And it won't be Strachey's propaganda for 'democratic State monopoly capitalism' that will prevent them from taking the next step.

VI.

This brings us to the question of what Mr. Strachey's propaganda is intended to do; where it stands, so to speak, in the pattern of

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evolution—not of Mr. Strachey, of course, but of confusionist propaganda in the Labour movement. And here two notable precedents present themselves.

The first was in 1899, at the opening of the era of Imperialism, between the first wars marking the new period of struggles for *redivision* of the already divided up world, when it was desperately necessary for the new class of monopoly capitalists to enlist at any rate the better paid workers firmly on their side. And lo, there arose Eduard Bernstein, a well known German Social-Democrat and populariser of Marx, to take up their cause. In his book he, too, announced to the world that economic evolution, unforeseen by Marx, had made Marx out of date: that his 'theory of increasing misery' had been disproved by events: that 'the motive force of the Labour movement is not extreme material need but the growing cultural demands of the workers, their rising cultural level and the progressing consciousness of their equality': and that democracy was 'the synonym for the absence of class domination . . . a social order in which not a single class enjoys political privileges in relation to the whole of society'. So there was no need for the workers to worry: they were the equal of the monopoly capitalists, at any rate in countries like France and Britain, and all they had to fight for was more culture—not, therefore, for the overthrow of the capitalist system.

Karl Kautsky's biting reply, *Criticism of the Theory and Practice of Marxism* (he was still a Marxist then), could still be read with profit by British Socialists. They would probably agree with Kautsky that 'as if in virtue of some psychological law, all critics of Marx move along one and the same path, whatever their point of departure.' And it is worth remembering that Bernstein's ideas gained the upper hand in the German Social-Democratic Party by 1907—with the result that Germany and all Europe were 'rolled in mud and blood' in 1914-18.

Secondly, there was a period in the British Labour movement, a quarter of a century later (1926-29), when the British working class had been defeated in the General Strike of 1926, not without the aid of the General Council, and a first attempt was being made to enlist their support on a grand scale for the policy of collaborating with monopoly capitalists instead of fighting them. It was hoped that 'never again' would there be such an historic display of class solidarity as in 1926, and a new ideology was sought, as a substitute for Socialism in the workers' minds. This was particularly urgent

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in 1926-27. The Soviet Union was still struggling with problems of industrialisation, and the Tory Government was busy trying to build up a European anti-Soviet coalition. The Chinese Revolution was making its first great stride forward. So the propagandists of class surrender turned to the United States, where the American trade union leaders were practising it in its most loathsome forms.

'America A School for Socialists' proclaimed the I.L.P. paper on March 26, 1926 (two-thirds of the Parliamentary Labour Party were then members of the I.L.P.). 'An economic revolution' had taken place in the U.S.A., because intelligent employers had made 'a tremendous change in the standards of the workers', wrote Norman Angell. The American 'object-lesson' was a 'flat contradiction' of Marx, wrote H. N. Brailsford in the I.L.P. paper (1/10/1926). Armed with this object-lesson, the I.L.P. leaders began a campaign in the Labour movement to replace the old objective—Socialism through getting rid of the capitalists—by a new aim: 'a living income' for every worker by distributing the national income 'equitably'. More culture for the workers, in fact, as in Bernstein's day. And clouds of rosy propaganda began to roll forth from every mouthpiece of reformism. America was held up as the pattern of a new prosperity. Increasing wealth would provide 'a steady rising standard of social life and continuously improving conditions of employment for the workers'—if only they would collaborate with the employers instead of combating them.

How did the campaign end? In the crash of American prosperity in 1930, in 15 million unemployed in the U.S.A., breadlines in the richest cities of the world, ruining of millions of farmers, and all the horrors of slump.

Today the war-time boom in jobs, artificially prolonged by American aggressive rearmament, is coming to an end. One after another America's satellites are admitting with a groan that the burden of rearmament imposed on them is too heavy for their workers to bear. There is a 'danger' that the workers may once again begin moving to end the monopoly capitalist system—and that the right-wing Labour leaders who staked their reputation on making it work, after the war, may be discredited with the 'oligopolists' for whom they were such faithful caretakers in 1945-51. At any price, before it is too late, some red herring must be found—'New Fabians', 'Socialist Union', Mr. Strachey's meditations on 'Marxism Revisited'—as it was in 1899 and 1927.

But it is a bit late in the day, Mr. Strachey.

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WHAT THEY CHOSE TO FORGET ABOUT HILAIRE BELLOC

R. PAGE ARNOT

IF anyone wished to track down the daily falsification of the present and the past in the capitalist press, they could hardly find a better short example than in the obituaries published on Hilaire Belloc in mid-July. What they told of him as 'a great man of letters' or as a poet in various kinds and a writer of historical sketches, or as an apologist for the Catholic Church, was not untrue. It was what they did not tell about him that was significant. No one reading the rhapsodies about his literary skill in the early period (to which they mostly referred) could have guessed that in those fifteen years of his greatest influence before the 1914-18 war, Hilaire Belloc was anti-monopolist, anti-imperialist, and a destructive critic of the monopoly-capitalist two-party system.

The direct lie came in the references to *The Servile State* (1912), as a description of what happens under socialism, though Belloc in that book had expressly made it clear that he was not dealing with socialism but with the Ramsay Macdonald and Fabian reformist policy that would produce a two-class state of capitalists and proletarians, the latter increasingly shackled by laws directed against them and their organisations. Belloc, in short, was writing then about the sort of society that in these forty years has developed both in the U.S.A. and Britain, respectively referred to in their thieves' cant as 'free enterprise' and 'the welfare state'. To this he contrasted 'collectivism, or the placing of the means of production in the hands of the political officers of the community' which could come only by 'a bold policy of Confiscation'.*

When Ivor Brown was challenged in the *Observer* for having given a misleading impression of *The Servile State,* he explained (a) that he had boyish recollections of Belloc and (b) that his apparent reference to *The Servile State* had not been a reference to *The Servile State,* but that he had just mentioned *The Servile State* as one of Belloc's best available books ought to be mentioned.

The *Manchester Guardian,* however, managed to behave like a hired model for one of Belloc's satirical pictures of the modern journalists when it wrote of 'the sombre interest of a mind that had

*In the Preface to the second edition Belloc says of his book's argument that it 'does not discuss the Socialist State' and that it 'bears no relation to the common accusation levelled against socialists that life in a Socialist State would be so subject to regulation and order as to be unduly oppressive'.

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persuaded itself that British public life was thoroughly corrupt and insincere'. Nor did it mention the Marconi affair, where the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Attorney-General were exonerated by the House of Commons from the charge of corrupt dealing in the shares of British Marconi, a wireless concern with which, as members of the Cabinet were aware, the Government was about to make a contract. They had, as it turned out, bought American Marconis.

Least of all did the newspapers refer to Belloc's attack on the two-party system designed to put the hoo-doo on the peoples of Britain and the U.S.A.

> Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
> Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.

For neither the monarchy, the Fountain of Justice, nor the judges (presumably the Spouts of Justice) are so sacred as the two-party system. The Labour Party, instituted to burst up the Mumbo-Jumbo, has a front bench that has now become one of the two partners in this system: and, as if to justify the shafts of Belloc's satire, the leader of the opposition in parliament is now given an official salary of £2,000 a year.

Belloc's attack on monopoly capitalism, though from a petty-bourgeois standpoint, was sharp and penetrating. In the 1911 Dock Strike against the monopolist Port of London Authority headed by Lord Devonport, what time Ben Tillet was kneeling on Tower Hill with his prayer 'God strike Lord Devonport dead!' Hilaire Belloc, having himself taken part in the earlier dock struggle of 1889, was writing, so far as my memory serves, as follows:

> The grocer Hudson Kearley
> When purchasing his barony
> Was offered, so we understand,
> The title of Lord Sugar-sand:
> Alternatively might have been
> Lord Over-weight of Margarine
> But, being of a nobler sort
> He chose the style of Devonport;
> And, where the dockers faint and die,
> Is worshipped to idolatry.

His argument against the Boer War, the first imperialist war of this century, and against the colonial wars, was primed with fierce indignation. Not a word about this in the press; nor any reference to his outstanding novel *Emmanuel Burden*, a compact satire which

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better than any other dealt with the downfall of the free trade epoch and the coming of monopoly capitalism. In this novel Belloc nearly fifty years ago gave an ironic description of the McKorio Delta which might apply to these last years in Malaya:

> The reduction of these our fellow-citizens, 'half devil and half child', would probably have proved too heavy a task for any troops save those who had been trained in our own magnificent and permanent school of colonial warfare. As it was, a short campaign sufficed to establish that *Pax* which the commander in his despatches cleverly termed *Britannica*. Before the month of December, 1887, the army was able to re-embark upon the Princess Mary; its task was accomplished.
>
> The rising of 1888 was more difficult to deal with, and that of 1889 (which may be regarded as one with the disturbances of 1890) put the local resources of our power to a very severe strain. . . .
>
> The rebellion of 1891 was a small matter, purposely exaggerated by the unpatriotic section of the House of Commons, and by the jealousy or ignorance of the Continental press; indeed for three full years no military operations were necessary, and even the armed disaffection which appeared in 1894 could hardly be dignified with the name of a rising; while the obscure movement of 1897, of which we heard so much in this country, appears to have been little more than an outbreak of inter-tribal bickering, which it was our easy duty to suppress.
>
> The general upheaval, which began in January, 1900, was a far more serious matter. The temporary difficulties which we were then experiencing in the south of the African continent were not without their re-echo in the central north, and, ludicrous as it seems, the Yaba may have thought, in company with more serious competitors, that a term had come to our national mission. They were undeceived. Difficult as it was to spare men, a sharp campaign, lasting into the first months of 1901, and unfortunately neglected in the noise of greater events, finally pacified the country. At the same moment the Delta was formally annexed and a governor appointed.
>
> With the rebellion of 1902 it is not my purpose to deal. The event is too near us in time to permit of an impartial estimate, while the disturbances of 1903 have not yet been reported upon, and those of 1904 are but their sequel.

Belloc's death coincided with the last week of centenary celebration of Cecil Rhodes as an expander of the Empire. No newspaper interrupted the torrent of Rhodes-worship to tell that Belloc and his circle fifty years ago had exposed this crooked financier's work in South Africa. Belloc was in the circle of Scawen Blunt who, on the death in 1902 of Rhodes, 'a rogue and a humbug', remarked that 'the capitalist newspapers are full of his praises'. Sir William Harcourt, who was Gladstone's last Chancellor of the Exchequer, told Blunt that Rhodes was 'an astonishing rogue and liar' and that Rhodes privately boasted of his methods of corruption, saying that

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he 'bought up everybody by putting them on to good things on the Stock Exchange' (2.11.1899).* When on April, 1902, Rhodes' famous will was disclosed, Emily Hobhouse and Blunt agreed that 'the four million pounds he leaves to public purpose are four million pounds robbed from the public and bequeathed to the ends of new robberies'. Not a word of this appeared. No, the suppression of the evil facts about Rhodes ran hand-in-hand with the suppression of the best of Belloc.

What answer can the newspapers give? Maybe they could argue that they are engaged in the propaganda of the cold war and that every column, even the obituary column, must be anxiously watched to prevent inconvenient facts becoming known: that Korea and Malaya and Kenya are sacred and bloody extensions of the cold war, and that no exposure of colonial wars is now permissible. Or maybe they could answer 'Perjury is a criminal offence: but we are not in the witness-box; nor have we sworn to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth'.

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*'Mr. Rhodes was convicted of crimes not hitherto regarded as venial in public or private life, yet he received a welcome from London which would have been appropriate to a great national hero. He counts divines amongst his apologists, Court personages and an ex-Premier amongst his friends, the chief newspapers amongst his private organs, and a Poet Laureate as a kind of pocket Homer to his Achilles.'

(J. L. Hammond, in *Liberalism and the Empire*, 1900.)

'By means of organised misrepresentation and judicious use of the telegraph wires, it came to be believed in this country that the settlers in Mashonaland were in imminent danger of being wiped out by a "horde" of savages.

'The Chartered Company's forces invaded Matabeleland, and by great good luck managed to seize Bulawayo with trifling loss. The event, according to the *Rhodesia Herald*, November 10, 1893, "Changed the face of Heaven and Earth".

'A brisk business was immediately done in Chartered Company's shares at an enhanced price, while in England the additional capital that was needed to mend the rents in the Company's financial garments was raised without difficulty. The fact that some thousands of Matabele lost their lives, as well as a detachment of gallant Europeans, was of little importance in the opposite scale.

'Such an appearance of prosperity was created that the chief holders of Chartered Company's shares were able a little later to unload them upon the public at a very heavy profit. . . .

'The profits realised by some of the principal shareholders for their operations were exposed in the House of Commons at this time by Mr. Labouchere and were calculated on a moderate basis as follows:

Name	*Profit*
	£
Duke of Abercorn	14,324
Duke of Fife	14,708
Earl Grey	27,612
Lord Gifford	38,388
Sir Horace Farquhar	60,928
Mr. Rhodes	546,376†
Mr. Beit	459,520
Mr. Rochfort Maguire	228,860
Goldfields of South Africa	477,108
Lord Rothschild	167,596
Beit and Rhodes	837,964†
Rhodes and Beit	45,600†
Rhodes, Rudd and Beit	68,000†

†'Compare Mr. Rhodes' speech to his shareholders, *Times*, May 2, 1900: "I should have liked to take more (than 200,000 shares), but during the last ten years I have devoted myself to politics; and politics and the accumulation of money do not run together".'

(F. W. Hirst, *ibid.*)

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HARRY QUELCH

V. I. LENIN

On the fortieth anniversary of the death of Harry Quelch—one of those pioneers of British socialism whom right-wing reactionaries sometimes mention but never dare to quote—Labour Monthly prints the tribute to him by V. I. Lenin. In this article Lenin makes an appreciation of a remarkable son of the British working class, and sums up with particular clarity the essential problems of the Labour movement in the country which first entered the path of imperialism. Lenin's analysis is as timely today as it was in 1913. Lenin did not idealise Quelch or his party: he had criticised Quelch strongly, two years before, for supporting Hyndman's demand for a bigger navy, and several times criticised the British Social-Democrats for the 'sectarian stamp' mentioned in this article. Lenin's genius nevertheless penetrated through the passing elements to the essential features of a movement which he had already (July 16, 1913) called 'not opportunist, genuinely independent of the Liberals'.—Ed., L.M.

ON Wednesday, September 17, Comrade Harry Quelch, the leader of the British Social-Democrats,* died in London. The British Social-Democratic organisation was founded in 1884 with the title of 'Social-Democratic Federation'. In 1909 the name of the party was changed to 'Social-Democratic Party', and in 1911, after a number of independent socialist groups had joined it, its name was changed to 'British Socialist Party'.

Harry Quelch was one of the most energetic and devoted workers in the British Social-Democratic movement. He was not only an active Social-Democratic party worker, but also an active trade unionist. The London Society of Compositors more than once elected him its chairman, and he had also been chairman of the London Trades Council.

Quelch was the editor of *Justice*, the weekly organ of the British Social-Democrats, as well as editor of the party monthly magazine, the *Social-Democrat*.

He took an active part in all spheres of work of the British Social-Democratic movement, and frequently spoke at party and mass meetings. On many occasions he represented the British Social-Democratic movement at international congresses and on the Inter-

*Before 1917 Marxists everywhere called themselves Social-Democrats. On Lenin's advice the Bolsheviks began to call themselves Communists—as Marx and Engels had done—because of the betrayal of Socialism by most Social-Democratic parties when the first World War began in 1914.

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national Socialist Bureau.† Incidentally, while attending the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart‡ he was persecuted by the Würtemburg Government, which deported him from Stuttgart (without trial, by police order, as an alien) for referring to the Hague Conference at a public meeting as a 'thieves' kitchen'. On the day following Quelch's deportation, when the Congress resumed its session, the British delegates left the chair on which Quelch had sat empty, and hung a notice on it bearing the inscription: 'Here sat Harry Quelch, who was deported yesterday by the Würtemburg Government'.

The South Germans often boast of their hatred for the Prussians on account of their officialdom, bureaucracy and police rule, but they themselves behave like the worst Prussians where a proletarian socialist is concerned.

The historical conditions in which the British Social-Democrats, whose leader Quelch was, have to carry on their activities are extremely peculiar. In the most advanced land of capitalism and political liberty, the British bourgeoisie (who as far back as the seventeenth century *settled accounts with absolute monarchy* in a pretty democratic manner) managed in the nineteenth century to *split* the British Labour movement. In the middle of the nineteenth century Great Britain enjoyed almost a complete monopoly in the world market. Thanks to this monopoly, the profits on British capital were so extraordinarily high that the British capitalists were able to share some crumbs of these profits with the aristocracy of labour, i.e., the skilled factory workers.

This aristocracy of labour, which at that time earned tolerably good wages, isolated itself from the mass of the proletariat in narrow, selfish craft unions, and in politics supported the Liberal bourgeoisie. And to this very day, perhaps, there is not anywhere in the world such a large number of Liberals among the advanced workers as there is in Britain.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, things began to change. Britain's monopoly was broken by America, Germany, etc. The economic basis of narrow, philistine trade unionism and Liberalism among the British workers was destroyed. Socialism is again raising its head in Britain, spreading among the masses and growing irresistibly *in spite of* the desperate opportunism of the British near-socialist intellectuals.

†The working body which maintained connections between affiliated bodies in the old, pre-1914, Second International.

‡In 1907.

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Quelch was in the front ranks of those who fought steadfastly and with conviction against opportunism and Liberal-Labour politics in the British Labour movement. It is true that their isolation from the masses sometimes put a certain sectarian stamp upon the British Social-Democrats. Hyndman, the leader and founder of Social-Democracy in Britain, has even sunk into chauvinism. But the Social-Democratic Party has rebuffed him,§ and over the whole of Britain only the British Social-Democrats have for decades carried on systematic propaganda and agitation in the spirit of Marxism. This is the very great historical service that Quelch and his comrades have rendered. The fruits of the work of the Marxist Quelch will be reaped in abundance by the British Labour movement within the next few years.

In conclusion one cannot but mention Quelch's sympathy with the Russian Social-Democrats and the assistance he rendered them. Eleven years ago the Russian Social-Democratic newspaper had to be printed in London.‖ The British Social-Democrats, led by Quelch, readily placed their printing plant at our disposal. As a consequence, Quelch himself had to 'squeeze up' in his office: a corner separated off by a thin partition had to serve him as his editorial room. This corner was furnished with a very small writing table, with a bookshelf over it, and a chair. When the present writer used to visit Quelch in this 'editorial office', there was no room for another chair.

(First published in *Pravda Truda*, September 24, 1913; now printed in *Works*, 4th Russian edition, XIX, pp. 331-3.)

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§Lenin was referring to the Blackpool conference of the B.S.P., earlier the same year, at which Hyndman had been defeated and forced out of the executive committee, to which only two of the old members, one of them Quelch, had been re-elected. Lenin had published an article on this, *Defeat of the Jingoes*, on May 27, 1913.

‖This was *Iskra*. The 'office' is now the Librarians' room at the Marx Memorial Library, 37a, Clerkenwell Green, E.C.1, formerly the premises of the Twentieth Century Press to which Lenin refers.

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RANK-AND-FILE COMMENT

Intense discussion has been going on among members of the Labour Party on the official draft policy document 'Challenge to Britain' and on various criticisms of it. From the host of many interesting communications we have received, we select some points of interest to our readers and print below extracts expressing the views of active Labour Party people, many of them holding official positions in their local organisations. They appear to be a representative cross-section of the movement, and significantly bear out the impressions created by the Draft Resolutions (dealt with elsewhere in this issue) that have been put down for the Labour Party Annual Conference at the end of this month.—Ed., L.M.

Southern Counties County Councillor:

Of course this is not the programme likely to get us victory. People want to be inspired, they want to feel that they are part of a crusade; indeed, they want—without knowing it—the same spirit that inspired the early Jesuit missionaries and the Levellers. It does not provide what was intended at last year's conference. Home and foreign policy are of course bound up together. One must remember the insularity of all sections of the British people and their aversion to foreign affairs. They must be led to see that one cannot divorce the two questions. But in country districts it will be hard. How can the movement bring about British initiative to ease international tension? I must regretfully say that I have no idea. The apathy here is enormous.

At a meeting here on 'Challenge to Britain' with a predominantly agricultural audience all the vocal people were far to the left of the official view. Some members were annoyed that Land Nationalisation was not mentioned. I got the impression that no one was very happy over this rather dim document.

Midlands Ward Secretary:

Any policy which seeks to take away the few small pleasures of life and turn man into a machine is an instrument of capitalism, not Socialism. If that is our policy, SCRAP IT! Home and foreign policy cannot be separated and the sooner we claim independence of the U.S.A. and build new friendships in Europe and Asia, the better for all. Also we must get financial—not social—independence of the trade unions, of which I am a member.

Scottish Industrial City:

Active Socialist members of the Labour Party here are most critical of national policy and feel that the ensuing months will be the most fateful in the Party's history. We continue the fight with increasing vigour.

Home Counties Veteran:

'Challenge to Britain' is a feeble evasion of fundamental Socialist principles and it ignores the mandates of the Morecambe Conference. For instance, it breaks the pledge given by Mikardo on behalf of the N.E.C. to Mr. Merrion of the A.U.B.T.W., to prepare a plan for the nationalisation

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of the building trades.* Home and foreign policy are interdependent, and to avoid declaring the foreign policy by the Labour Party is cowardly and a betrayal of world peace and socialist fundamental principles. 'Challenge to Britain' ignores the Morecambe mandate and is a negation of Socialism. At the 'Victory of Socialism' Conference in London recently, not a single voice was raised in support of it. I always find I am in favour of J. B. Figgins' courageous and inspiring statements on Socialism and trade union policy and I find the *Labour Monthly* a continual source of inspiration—I admire your courage, clear-thinking and tenacity very much. True Socialists would boldly plan to nationalise the land and all the key industries and the banks and to control credit. Moreover they would repudiate our military commitments to America with the unnecessary slaughter of British conscripts in Korea (where the Americans are in collusion with Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek): they would also repudiate rearmament imposed by America.

North-East Coast Councillor:

This is certainly not the Socialist policy it claims to be. Socialism should not visualise 'hot' or 'cold' wars, and certainly cannot carry out its aims with a huge rearmament millstone round its neck. Furthermore, the fact that an industry is bankrupt or inefficient is not the Socialist reason for it to become social property. Where, also, is the worker's say in the running of industry? Last year's conference has been completely ignored, and it is past time that the T.U.C. and the big, unrepresentative unions were brought into line with rank and file desires. Permanent General Secretaryships have become a curse. The Deakins, Evanses and Lawthers would seem to behave as bosses, not as servants of their members. Acceptance of Tory jobs shows how interests of the rank and file are betrayed. The T.U.C. is not a co-ordinator of T.U. activity but a Tory-type brake.

Home and Foreign policies are not two separate items. An imperialist foreign policy can never result in Socialism at home, nor vice-versa. We have seen how we cannot have 'guns and butter', but no true Socialist should have needed these years of proof. The movement needs to weld together all progressive forces to fight the Tory reaction at home and international capitalism on the wider front. The I.C.F.T.U. was a retrograde step and is now becoming more and more apparently an instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy. There is only one efficient answer to all our troubles and that is get rid of the apathy within our ranks, then nothing will stop the workers.

These views could be greatly enlarged but I think are more widely held than the leadership cares to admit.

---

*In fairness to Mr. Mikardo, we quote the relevant extract from last year's debate.—Ed., *L.M.*

The Chairman: Will the Building Workers agree to their resolution being remitted to the National Executive? Kensington have agreed to remit theirs.

Mr. L. C. Merrion (A.U.B.T.W.): I want first and foremost a categorical statement that the building industry itself will be taken into the fullest degree of consultation, and that a blueprint will be shaped and laid before the next Conference in order that when we go to the battle again with the Tories we can show to the people that we really mean business.

Mr. Mikardo: I say to the A.U.B.T.W. and to all the other building trade unions that if they will let us have their views on what ought to be done as quickly as possible, we shall be very, very grateful indeed.

The Chairman: With that statement will the Building Trade Workers agree to it being remitted?

Mr. L. C. Merrion: Yes.

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London (East):

Apart from the national and international contradictions inherent in 'Challenge to Britain'—trade with democracies and the importance of peace—I am greatly surprised that no mention is given to the development of atomic energy in the industrial field, on a massive scale. We are living in the transition period from the machine age to the atomic age, and the significance of this should obviously be stressed by all progressive thinkers.

London (South):

We should take advantage of increasing our trade with China especially as the U.S.A. has done so in Japan and blocked the U.K. from Japanese markets. There must be nationalisation of the drug industry, and ophthalmic and medical appliances industries if only to reduce the cost of the health service. There must be a programme for building health centres and a full-time salaried service of all those engaged in the health service, including consultants, dentists, etc.

Home Counties:

The problem that worries me is how on earth home policy can be discussed apart from foreign policy, which must come first. If your foreign policy necessitates a big rearmament programme, then your home policy is restricted. If you restrict your trade to certain countries, then again your home policy is tied. Labour must lead in throwing off the American yoke. East-West trade will ease international tension. Although it is not the be-all and end-all of our recovery programme, it could be and must be our sheet anchor against the inevitable American slump. An economic tremor in America means a fairly large quake for Britain, with us providing the cushion into the bargain.

Yorkshire:

The dominant theme of 'Challenge to Britain' seems to be that we must have increased productivity in order to compete in the dollar markets—ignoring of course the non-dollar markets from which the Battle Act excludes us. But along with the increased productivity we must have no general increase in wages because prices must be kept down—ignoring this time, the fact that prices could be drastically reduced by the abolition of profits. In other words, the sacrifices mentioned on pages 1, 19 and 27 are to be borne as usual by the working class. This would be all right if it were a Tory Party statement or even if the N.E.C. would be honest enough to admit that it is in favour of an anti-socialist policy. But the nauseating thing is that the statement refers to 'drastic Socialist measures'. Socialism, most emphatically, does not mean sacrifices for the working class. Indeed the Labour movement has been saying for years that the emancipation of the working class can only be brought about through Socialism. If we are now going to ask the people to vote for a policy of sacrifice, we shall never see another Labour Government. If they want sacrifices, they can vote for the Tories who can always be relied upon to provide plenty of sacrifices for the working class to make.

Having told you what I think about the section dealing with economic policy, it is only fair to add that I am much more satisfied with other

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sections. I do feel that, by and large, the social reform section is all right so far as it goes. But it is really no more than Radical Liberalism and comes nowhere near the root of the problem because the members of the N.E.C. are incapable of Socialist thought. (There may be one or two exceptions, I don't know.) This is betrayed, for example, when they say 'The provision of health centres on a large scale is the long-term solution. But available resources at present permit the establishment of very few.' Socialism would demand that resources be made available for a project vital to the health of the people. Resources could be diverted from such frivolities as coronations, for example.

I should add that all the members of my L.P. to whom I have so far spoken about the document are extremely dissatisfied with it. I know it can be amended at Margate, but it would need so much amendment to make it worth while that it would probably be better to scrap it and start again. I have very definite views on the foreign policy question and I do feel that the N.E.C. has deliberately withheld the statement in order to prevent constituency parties sending in amendments to it for the conference.

London (South-East):

When I had read 'Challenge to Britain', I crossed out 'Britain' and inserted 'Rank and File'. It is not the socialist programme we need; it is useless to discuss home policy without foreign policy; it doesn't provide what Morecambe delegates intended.

Book Reviews

CHINA: TRAVAIL AND TRIUMPH

Yo Banfa (We *have* a way), by Rewi Alley. Edited by Shirley Barton, foreword by Joseph Needham, F.R.S., (193 pp. China Monthly Review, Shanghai; Collet's, London. *2s. 6d.*)

REWI ALLEY, the almost legendary New Zealander, whose name became linked with Chinese Industrial Co-operatives nearly twenty years ago, first knew China diseased and rotting in the loathsome grip of imperialism. But with the insight of integrity he saw under this hideous stinking veil the real China, her people, her workers and peasants. And with the courage of his integrity he stayed in China through the Japanese invasion and the Kuomintang terror, with the people of China, working and teaching, not the empty superstition of the missionaries 'who could find nothing to hope for amongst the people they wanted to change' . . . 'trying to catch souls while stomachs remain empty' (p. 137), but real things, how to mine coal, to make bricks, to till and enrich the soil, to grow wool, to live together, to co-operate. With some of the simplicity of Robert Owen, this man sought to build productive co-operatives amid the rascality of the Kuo-min-tang: but found his aim could only become nation-wide when the Kuomintang had been overthrown by the People's Liberation Army led by the Communist Party of China.

The Chinese people have won through to victory and Rewi Alley is there, sharing their joy as he shared their difficulties. Here he tells some of the stories of China's travail, of the inspired courage and dogged

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determination which eventually brought triumph. With stark simplicity he relates the brutal horror of imperialist exploitation in the sweated industries of Shanghai which as a factory inspector from 1928 to 1938 he knew intimately, leaving those who upheld and tried to perpetuate this evil system nothing but eternal shame behind which to cower from the clear gaze of China's liberated people. Using the method of the 'Flash-back', so effective in films, he poses the shining new China against the blackness of the old. Here is one example:

> A house built for one or two families to live in would be converted into a factory employing several hundred children making flashlight bulbs for the five and ten cent stores abroad.
>
> In the steaming heat of a Shanghai summer, when the foreigners and their compradores lay exhausted in deck chairs on shaded lawns, sipping cool drinks brought by attentive servants, these children toiled from dawn to dark in crowded lifts, their weary faces close to the Bunsen burners, their legs swollen with beri-beri, their sweating bodies covered with sores from bed-bugs and lice. In the not too distant future their hearts would stop working, for they were already enlarged.
>
> From the famine and the flood, from the civil war and all the disturbances of the interior, a fresh wave of children would arrive in the city and be bought up by the loafers and gangsters who ran small industry. Of these there were many. . . .

And on April 11th, 1951, some two years after Liberation, Rewi Alley went

> To lunch with Meg Tso-shen, in the grounds of Pei Hai, where

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spring blossom and green willow sprout, where crowds of school children singing and flowing up and down the little hill and around the lake make the place a temple to spring indeed.

There were kids everywhere it seemed. Some with Young Pioneer flags, some with drums and cymbals beating out the rhythm for dancing, some climbing rocks, their scarves flashes of scarlet against the white *dagoba,* some out on the lake in boats. . . . Let the author explain his title:

In the old China, there was a cry, the cry of a people who could see no way out. It was the cry of the defeated, the hopeless—'*Mei-yo banfa*'.

Then there began to appear men who changed the tune. As the Japanese imperialists penetrated, these men fought back. The '*Mei-yo banfa*' changed to '*Yo* Banfa!'—We *have* a way, 'It *can* be done!'

Everywhere men began to look with hope at their tasks, at difficulties overcome, began to turn to one another and say, '*Yo* banfa!'

After reading the book one is left a little breathless at the speed with which the people are marching forward. Terrific onslaughts are being made in all directions, on the remnants of the old and feudal past. Nothing is left untouched. Everything is being harnessed for the common good. The bitterness which became such a powerful force in the struggle against the oppressors, has now been transformed into a mighty weapon in the reconstruction of their country and the building of a happy life.

M. PARRISH.

AMERICANS ON SOVIET DEMOCRACY

Soviet Civilisation, by Corliss Lamont. (433 pp. Philosophical Library, New York; Elek Books, London. *18s.*).

DR. LAMONT'S book consists of an outline of the main features of Soviet civilisation, and a survey of American-Soviet relations. It should do much good if it can reach its declared audience: the honest American citizen who is willing to recognise the truth when it is put before him. Dr. Lamont brings out clearly the main Soviet achievements in economic construction, cultural advance, racial and religious toleration, and the fight for peace. In describing the actual working of Soviet institutions, he answers his own occasional comments on alleged shortcomings in political democracy in the U.S.S.R. The book has a special interest for British readers in the comparisons he draws with American institutions—e.g., that 'ten times as many Soviet citizens hold elective posts as are chosen by the American people'. There are also a number of useful quotations from leading Americans, both those who praised the U.S.S.R. during the wartime alliance, and those who lately have made the most outrageous suggestions about atomic annihilation.

JUDITH TODD.

CORRECTION: On page 369 of our August issue the word 'eighty' should have read 'seventy'.

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the finest traditions of our British movement. This month we devote the whole magazine to these great issues. However, a warning to the busy reader—don't imagine that the item *Communications* consists perhaps of some dispute between an author and a contributor over a book review, to be glanced at when you have a little leisure! These are extracts from striking letters received from active Labour Party members, thrashing out their views of the official 'Challenge to Britain' and the 'Resolutions' down for Annual Conference. I guarantee them highly stimulating, and a portent of progress. I believe readers will find this whole number what one of the contributors to *Communications* said of the August *L.M.*: 'It gets down to business, not just intellectual platitudes'.

SIX TANNERS

To turn to the fund. Three weeks ago came a letter from a building trade worker, long a keen supporter: '*L.M.* keeps up the usual high standards, but the fund, I see, is down. I hope it is better next month, though hard times are hitting all working-class publications'. Despite recent unemployment he sent his gift, and I know he will be delighted to see the fund improved. Thanks to such readers as a Lincolnshire man who writes: 'After reading *L.M.* regularly since 1947, I think it is not before time that I helped with the fund'. And from Nottinghamshire: 'A bit to further the work of the most useful penmen here or elsewhere. For years I've looked forward with eagerness to its inspiration on the first of each month, and it's never failed me yet. All the best to you brave people in this world-wide fight for freedom'. A Northumbrian sends, 'my usual, and six tanners extra from six friends, who agree that we must give financial support and increase the circulation'. And thanks to all those readers who used our back-cover specimen copy scheme in such numbers to introduce us to neighbours and workmates. More new readers mean more new friends to keep the total up to the July figure of

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